



The Kansas Department of Corrections

"a safer Kansas through effective correctional services"

NEWSLETTER

January, 2007

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Several of the articles in this month's newsletter deal with changes in our department. The historian Henry Steele Commager said, "Change does not necessarily assure progress, but progress implacably requires change." That's something we should remember as we set our course for better corrections practices in the New Year.



The willingness to accept change does not come naturally to many; the willingness to actively pursue it is even rarer. I hear the phrase "That's the way we've always done it" a lot more than I hear "Let's take a chance and try something new." And to be truthful, it's the second phrase that tends to make me uncomfortable.

Doing things the same way every time does offer a sense of security. If we know what to expect, we are not anxious about turning the next corner. But as I often remind myself, the department cannot hope to make progress by standing still.

As I and others of our colleagues have noted, corrections is, among other things, a business. Like any other business, we must embrace and employ new research, new knowledge and new and better ways of performing. Failure to do so may not put us out of business, but it will make us irrelevant to our policymakers, our consumers, and our communities. That is not an outcome I am willing to accept.

It is refreshing to meet the enthusiastic newcomers to our department. For them, change is a given. Their unique perspective on corrections work will inspire us to do great things. And it is with a strong sense of pride that I observe the very same enthusiasm in many of our seasoned veterans. Theirs is the well-earned wisdom that will demand our attention to progress.

STATE AND LOCAL POLICYMAKERS CONSIDER OPTIONS TO AVERT RISE IN PRISON COSTS

Legislators, state officials, and local leaders gathered at a criminal justice policy forum on Tuesday, December 12, 2006. The policy forum focused on the state's plan to reduce recidivism and offered policy options to slow the growth in the state's prison population.

The issue of planning for offender reentry has come to the forefront of social concern in recent years, with over 670,000 incarcerated individuals being released from prison nationally every year. In Fiscal year 2006, 5678 offenders returned to Kansas communities after having finished their prison terms. Though the number of releases has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years, the trend in prison lengths of stay has continued to climb.

Based on projections by the Kansas Sentencing Commission, the prison population is anticipated to increase 26 percent over the next nine years. The cost of new prison construction and operating costs to accommodate this population increase could reach \$500 million dollars.

This alarming trend leaves Kansas policymakers with two options – either allow the system to grow along with the associated costs, or identify policy options to safely reduce the projected growth and its concurrent expenditures.

Many state policymakers have advocated the development of a justice reinvestment strategy: reduce recidivism; avert the cost of building and operating additional prisons; and improve conditions in the neighborhoods to which people in prison will likely return.

According to Governor Kathleen Sebelius, "Building more prisons does not solve our problems. We must continue to identify and pursue the most cost-effective ways of reducing recidivism and increasing public safety."

As part of its commitment to improve public safety, the Kansas Department of Corrections has embarked on an innovative offender reentry strategy, beginning with the opening of the Shawnee County Reentry Program in 2003. The program's positive reception by inmates, their families and the community, was soon followed by legislative support for additional programs and the Sedgwick County Reentry opened in January of 2006, with the Statewide Reentry Team opening its offices in September of 2006.

The reentry program, entitled *Kansas Reentry and Risk Reduction*, which offers comprehensive pre-release planning and community transitional services to its high-risk participants, has a broad base of bipartisan support from state and national legislators, as well as the support of national foundations, including the JEHT Foundation of New York. On January 4, 2007, Governor Kathleen Sebelius announced that the JEHT Foundation had awarded the Kansas Department of Corrections a \$4.67 million grant to further expand its reentry strategy. JEHT had previously

awarded the department more than half a million dollars in grant funding.

The Pew Charitable Trusts has selected Kansas as one of eight states to receive the project's direct assistance in improving the performance of sentencing and corrections policies and programs. Working with the Council of State Governments and other partners, Pew's project provides nonpartisan research, analysis and expertise to help states such as Kansas identify data-driven, fiscally responsible policy options.

Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz said, "We consider ourselves extremely lucky to have such a broad range of support for this effort. It is only by working together as a nation, a state, and most importantly, a community that we can resolve the fundamental issue of significantly reducing re-offending behavior."

At the conference, national experts in the criminal justice field presented evidence-based policy alternatives, including the offender reentry model, to stem the tide of prison growth.

The conference was sponsored by the Kansas Department of Corrections, Kansas Reentry Policy Council, Kansas Recodification, Rehabilitation, and Restoration Committee, and the Council of State Governments.



Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz addresses policymakers at the December Reentry Policy Conference. To his immediate right is Robert Crane, President of the JEHT Foundation. To Mr. Crane's right is Lori Grange, Senior Officer, Policy Initiatives, The Pew Charitable Trusts.

THE COMPANY WE KEEP

So often we hear about the risk of managing the corrections population. The following is an example of how corrections staff, inmates and communities are working together to make good things happen.

The Trinity Episcopal Church of Norton established God's Pantry in 1985 to collect and distribute donated food to county residents year-round. In December of 2006, the Norton Correctional Facility minimum and medium security Stop Violence Program participants collected and delivered eight boxes of donated items on behalf of the food drive.

According to the thank you memo to the NCF staff from Stop Violence Coordinators Unit Team Manager S. Petrie and Corrections Counselor I S. Ross, "Those who utilize God's Pantry are always very grateful and you should be proud that you were able to give back to the community during the holiday season. Your thoughtfulness will bless others and is very much appreciated."

WHEN IT COUNTS

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."
— William James

This section features Kansas Department of Corrections employees who believe everything they do can make a difference.

At the end of 2006, Warden Ray Roberts of El Dorado Correctional Facility received letters from 2 inmates who thought it was important to express their gratitude for the work of the corrections officers who served them.

The first letter came from an inmate who was suffering from medical problems. According to the inmate, "I have been going through some really bad medical issues over the last few weeks, and the [corrections officers] that have been on transport have really been very professional, not to mention respectful. I usually do not get involved in matters such as this, but Mr. Roberts these certain officers do need to be recognized for [the] jobs that they do... Officers Dang, Maddox and Vitrios treated me with the utmost respect, and helped me with the mental distress that I was going through with the medical issue at hand...And Mr. Roberts, you sir do have some pretty good officers working for you right now on the SST Team. I may be an inmate, but sir, I am also still a human being. And that's exactly how I was treated by the officers that I mentioned in this letter. As a human being."

Another inmate wrote to describe how he had been helped by a long list of corrections officers (and 2 fellow inmates) to grow and develop as a person. As this inmate said, "I recently wrote a letter to you giving recognition and appreciation to staff who [have] gone beyond their duties to help me become a better person, who [have] encouraged me to fight the old ways I had...As I sat back and thought I realized that

I had forgotten some staff that deserve appreciation and recognition too...As many officers have said...I had to prove to people with actions I wanted to change, and that I really wanted and needed help. I've really been putting an effort into changing...I request, hope that you give the same recognition and appreciation that was given to the others."

LEADERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

Several years ago, Kansas Department of Corrections leaders discovered something startling. Many of this generation's department leaders would soon reach retirement age without a new source of leaders to replace them. They realized they needed to quickly develop and implement a strategic plan to prevent this from happening.

What resulted was a holistic approach to identifying and cultivating high-level corrections leadership. The Leadership Development Academy (LDA) is now in its second year and, if its graduates and current participants are any indication, the future of Kansas Department of Corrections leadership looks promising.

According to Staff Development Director and program developer/facilitator Becky Galbraith, "It's encouraging to be face to face with our most valuable resources. The academy participants represent some of the best and brightest prospects for leading the department into its next phase of growth. It's a pleasure to work with these current and future leaders."

The Leadership Development Academy consists of various Kansas Department of Corrections staff members from across the state, as well as representatives from the Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority. To be eligible for application, KDOC staff members must report directly to a member of the System Management Team. Though there is no limit on the number of participants chosen from each facility or department, the LDA faculty strives for comprehensive representation. There are 29 students in this year's class, 4 of whom are from JJA.

LDA participants meet one day each month over the course of a year to discuss such widely varied topics as ethical leadership and legislative process. December's topic was interpersonal leadership skills. The participants were asked to take a survey of their leadership strengths and weaknesses before the session. During the session, they were asked various questions about their responses to the survey and how their strengths and weaknesses might affect their leadership ability.

As LDA graduate John Turner said, "There is no better opportunity than Leadership Development Academy to work with your peers. The environment is ripe for growth and learning. The experience changed all of us as well as the KDOC for the better."

The Leadership Development Academy is the first phase of a leadership program expansion strategy. Development is un-

derway for Level I training entitled “Building Our Bench”, Level II training entitled “Basic Supervisory Training and Continuing Education for Supervisors”, and Level III training entitled “Transition from Supervision to Manager”. For more information on the Kansas Department of Corrections Leadership Development Academy, contact Staff Development Director Becky Galbraith at 785-296-0249.

SEX OFFENDER POLICY BOARD ISSUES REPORT

This article contains excerpts from the Kansas Sex Offender Policy Board report on sex offender residence restrictions. The creation of the Board was authorized by the Governor and the 2006 legislature to study various issues relative to the treatment and management of sex offenders. Released on January 9th, 2006, the report also addresses the issues of electronic monitoring, public notification, and the management of juvenile sex offenders.

The Kansas Sex Offender Policy Board met with the Special Committee on Judiciary on November 15, 2006, to discuss the issue of residence restrictions for sex offenders. The Board heard testimony on the subject from two Kansas community representatives as well as five researchers and subject matter experts from across the United States.

Information presented to Sex Offender Policy Board members included research studies from Arkansas, Colorado, Minnesota and Florida, as well as statements and position papers to the Iowa legislature from the Iowa County Attorneys Association and the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Abuse. The Board also received a variety of news items collected starting in January of 2006 which discussed the experiences of other states that have dealt with the issue of residence restrictions.

Sex offender residence restrictions, or buffer zones, typically mandate a legally determined barrier around places where children congregate, such as parks, playgrounds, and schools. The barriers have been known to range from 500 to 2500 feet, precluding sex offenders from living within these areas. Proponents of residence restrictions often argue that the further away in proximity sex offenders are from potential victims, the less likely they are to re-offend against those victims...

The appeal of residence restrictions is to protect public safety, and more particularly, the safety of children. The fundamental issues to consider are whether residence restrictions for sex offenders have been proven to protect public safety, whether the theory behind residence restrictions is consistent with research and best practices in the fields of corrections and law enforcement, the viability of enforcing the restrictions, and whether the resources utilized for such an effort would be best directed toward alternative measures that would protect a larger segment of the population and/or one that is at higher risk of victimization...

The Sex Offender Policy Board’s recommendations were as follows:

- Although residence restrictions appear to have strong public support, the Board found no evidence to support their efficacy. It is imperative that policy makers enact laws that will actually make the public safe and not laws giving the public a false sense of security.
- It is recommended that the legislature make permanent the moratorium on residential restrictions. However, the moratorium should not be intended to interfere with a locality’s ability to regulate through zoning the location of congregate dwellings for offenders such as group homes.
- Residency restrictions should be determined based on individually identified risk factors.
- The most effective alternative for protecting children is a comprehensive education program. It is recommended that the necessary resources be provided to an agency determined appropriate by the legislature to educate Kansas parents, children and communities regarding effective ways to prevent and respond to sexual abuse. Such an education program should include all victims and potential victims of child sexual abuse.
- In order for an effective model policy to be developed, the issue of sex offender residence restrictions should be referred to the Council of State Governments, the National Governor’s Association and similar organizations to prevent states and localities from shifting the population and potential problems of managing sex offenders back and forth among states.

For more information about the Sex Offender Policy Board, please view “Safety Initiatives” at the following link:
<http://www.governor.ks.gov/initiatives.htm#safety>

SECRETARY WERHOLTZ ENGAGES THE COMMUNITY

Access to public officials isn’t what it used to be. Not too long ago, talking with a policymaker or the head of a state agency meant writing a letter and scheduling a time to meet or making a phone call and hoping to find the person available.

Now, having a conversation with a public servant can be as simple as logging on to your computer. That’s what internet users discovered on December 19, 2006 when Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz participated in an online chat at the offices of the Lawrence Journal-World.

As Secretary Werholtz observed, “All these years, the department has been trying to think of how best to share corrections information and now we have an innovative way of doing that. Hundreds of people at a time can directly ex-

change their thoughts and ideas with a public official. It's an incredible experience to be able to respond to questions and concerns that may never have been expressed otherwise."

The Journal-World posts its online chats dating back to July of 2006. Chat topics have varied widely from gas price fluctuations to movies to sports. Public officials who have previously participated in chats include Kansas Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger and U.S. Representative Dennis Moore.

Topics of interest during the chat included reentry initiatives, prison industry wages, and private prisons. The Secretary was online for about an hour starting at 1:30 pm.

To view a transcript of Secretary Werholtz's online chat, please visit the Lawrence Journal-World website at: http://www2.ljworld.com/chats/2006/dec/19/roger_werholtz/

PAROLE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS SELECTED

The Kansas Department of Corrections has selected representatives to serve as public information officers for the agency's three major metropolitan parole offices. Christy Gates of the Wichita parole office, Carrie Howell of the Topeka parole office, and Joshua Peery of the Kansas City parole office will serve as media and public information contacts for their respective regions.

Keven Pellant, Deputy Secretary of Community and Field Services for the department, appreciates the benefit of having public information representatives in the community. "It's important to have people in the field who can connect with the public. If a citizen or a member of the media has a question about parole services, the best person to answer that question is someone local. We view this as the next step towards establishing an open, productive dialogue with our neighbors".



Christy Gates
Wichita Parole Of-
fice



Carrie Howell
Topeka Parole
Office



Joshua Peery
Kansas City Parole
Office

Kansas Department of Corrections Internal Management Policy and Procedure 08-101 establishes a procedure for appointing public information officers at each correctional facility and in parole regions. The correctional facility public information officers are as follows:

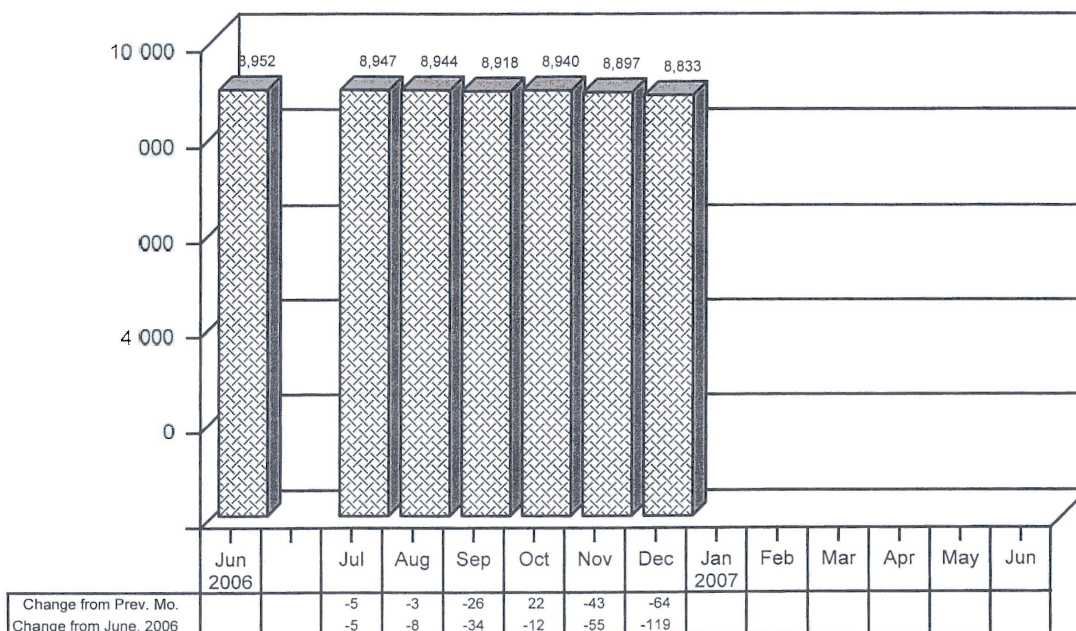
Ellsworth Correctional Facility – Jina Murrell
El Dorado Correctional Facility – Dale Call
Hutchinson Correctional Facility – Steve Schneider
Lansing Correctional Facility – Brett Peterson
Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility – Cindy Stejskal
Norton Correctional Facility – Kathy Wilmot
Topeka Correctional Facility – Rick Buehler
Winfield Correctional Facility/Wichita Work Release –
Robbie Reynolds

The newly appointed public information officers will join their colleagues for emergency communications training at Ellsworth Correctional Facility on February 16th, 2007.

For more information on the Kansas Department of Corrections public information program, please contact department Public Information Officer Frances Breyne at 785-296-5873.

Kansas Department of Corrections
Graphic Highlights—Monthly Offender Population Report (December 2006)

End-of-month Inmate Population: FY 2007 to Date*

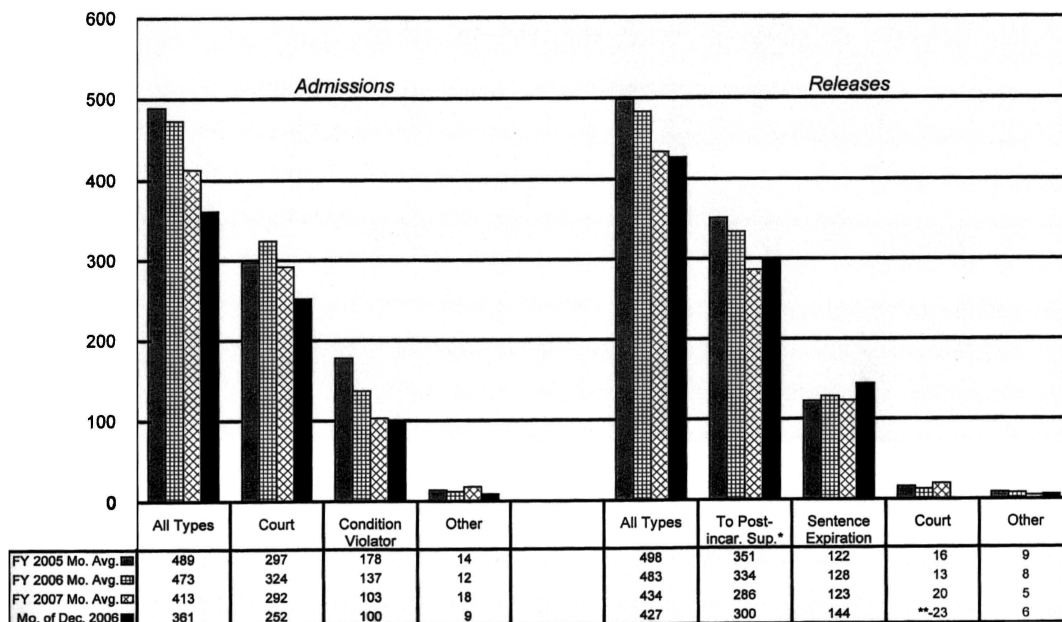


*Figures reflect the total inmate population (combined OC Non-D facility population)
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Kansas Department of Corrections
Graphic Highlights – Monthly Offender Population Report (December 2006)

Number of Admission and Release Events Per Month (by Major Category): Comparison of FY 2005, FY 2006, and FY 2007 to Date Monthly Averages with Current Month's Totals



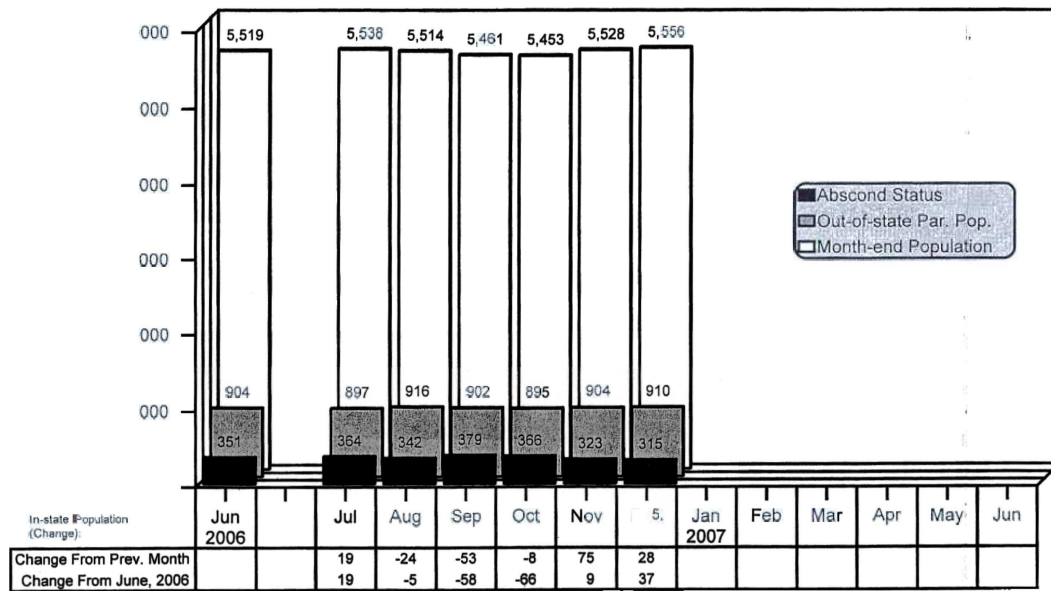
*Includes parole releases by action of the Kansas Parole Board as well as releases to supervision via the provisions of the Kansas Sentencing Guidelines Act of 1993.

** Figure can be a negative number for a particular month (since it is based on the total number whose last exit for the period (fiscal year to date) was via "out-to-court" minus the previous month's total, which can be a smaller or greater number).

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Kansas Department of Corrections
Graphic Highlights—Monthly Offender Population Report (December 2006)

Components of the End-of-month Population Under Post-incarceration Management: FY 2007 to Date*

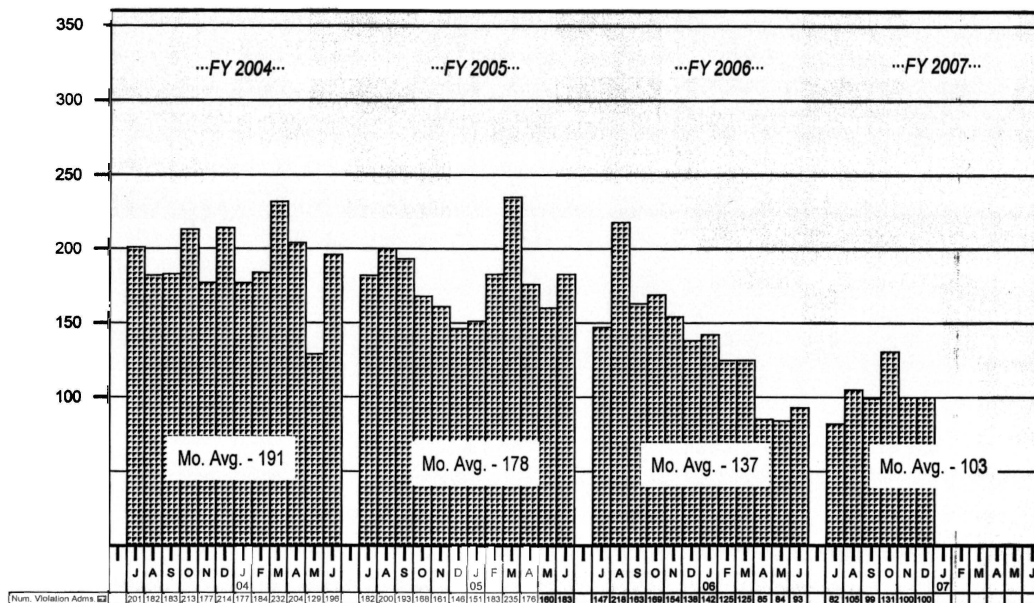


*In-state population is comprised of Kansas offenders supervised in Kansas and out-of-state offenders supervised in Kansas. Out-of-state population comprised of Kansas offenders supervised out-of-state. Those on abscond status have active warrants (whereabouts unknown).

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Kansas Department of Corrections
Graphic Highlights -- Monthly Offender Population Report (December 2006)

Number of Return Admissions for Condition Violations by Month: FY 2004 - FY 2007 to Date*



Total number of admissions for violation of the conditions of release (no new sentence).

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